

Bilingualism and language pollution: A study on the impact of practicing mixed English in communication

H. A. Swarna Ihalagama
Senior Lecturer, University of Kelaniya
swarnaihalagama@yahoo.com

The majority of Sinhalese people use their mother tongue as the main vehicle of communication, but there is a growing trend of mixing English terms with Sinhala terms in communication activities. It is due to English becoming a major linguistic force in Sri Lanka for various reasons such as its colonial heritage, impact of globalization, new technologies of communication, growing up in international schools, increasing number of Sri Lankans working overseas and predilection for using English by many urban occupants. As a result of this, Sinhala speaking society has become a Sinhala-English bilingual society. When people use English to the detriment of their first language, then the situation appears to be discomfited and linguistically unproductive. The present study is to examine the patterns of mixed English use in day to day communication and how it affects the contamination of Sinhala language. Data and information for this study are collected from a sample of 30 bilingual and employed individuals in public and private sectors and some advertisements in printed and electronic media and name boards of commercial places. Based on the findings it can be concluded that, practicing mixed English in communication activities, influence Sinhala speakers to imitate such bilingual variations and it will lead to pollution and unsustainability of Sinhala language which is a precious cultural asset of Sinhala community.

Keywords: Language mixing, Bilingualism, Communication, Language pollution